

Global Reset — COVID-19 Marketing Guidance



Global Reset —



We're currently facing a large-scale population behavioral change. The world is suffering a collective burnout. Because of this, our established value concepts became outdated overnight for the whole of society, and trusted rules of media consumption were turned upside down within just 24 hours.

What will the aftermath of the global COVID-19 pandemic mean for brands and marketers? Here is our ongoing updated guidance, detailing trends and opportunities we see coming, and thought-starters on how to approach this shift in digital brand communication.

W H O W E A R E

LOOP is a digital-first lead agency, exploring the intersections between design, technology and digital brand building for leading brands. With a team of 180 digital talents and through data driven marketing, we help brave clients to stand out in the digital age.

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“We have always
done marketing
like this.”

“We’ve always done it like this” is finally irrelevant, as our society establishes completely new behaviors now.

THESIS # 1

Forget all of your personas.

Your customer is defined as socially active. Enjoys a good dinner with friends. Likes travelling around the world. That was your January 2020 persona, and it will never be the same again. Your new audience is at home and has to discover a new way of living.

Why is this important?

With quickly evolving consumer behavior, every marketing strategy is outdated now.

What is the opportunity?

Brands that act quickly now and understand that there is no chance to move on as usual will be first movers into a new society with unique trends and behavior patterns.

Implications and thought starters.

This is especially important for social media, content strategy, e-commerce, digital ad spending, technology.



01

Engagement is newly defined.

Could you have imagined 10.000 people doing paper crafts on Instagram Live at 5pm in January 2020? Engagement has a completely new meaning with everyone having endless time at home.

Why is this important?

With everyone sitting at home and suddenly having time, we must forget everything we learned about engagement. The game just re-started.

What is the opportunity?

Long-format video content, Instagram Live and other formats that make our users' day at home more exciting.

Implications and thought starters.

Think online cooking shows from your employees' homes. Think virtual training sessions. Think group hand-craft through Instagram Live. Think learning new skills via Facebook Live each day after 6pm. Think your employees showing their flats MTV Cribs style on TikTok.



02

Perfect is boring now.

Creativity is needed to create brand content from home. And it is exactly this creative style that quickly turns into internet pop culture now. Perfect became totally boring, within just a few days.

Why is this important?

Don't move on with your usual content. Consider home-shot content now that feels like you are part of what society is going through at this point.

What is the opportunity?

Brands can build up massive brand loyalty and love now, by showing understanding and empathy for the sole persona at this point.

Implications and thought starters.

Let your content match user content. Allow your employees to take over your IG stories or TikTok. Say yes to unpolished home productions done in a random friend's kitchen, published on a 1 million followers IG page.



03

Attention spans too short? Solved.

For years we used creativity to build content for a busy society that has a short attention span and has literally no more than 10 seconds to watch your content. This just turned upside down.

Why is this important?

Again, it not only changes the content, it changes our total way of thinking. Starting from your initial strategy and the creative approach, ending with the actual assets.

What is the opportunity?

Understanding consumer behavior to deliver valuable content and engagement assets. People have time now. Give them something that is fun, kind and engaging. Make them feel good.

Implications and thought starters.

15-minute videos on Instagram timelines. A full 1-hour live cooking show that invites people to take part at lunch time. Soccer training via FB Live with your favorite player. It's possible now, because people have time and are looking for things to do.



04

Virtual everything.

Every business and product that isn't also a virtual business and product might be in big trouble now. Companies will invest budget to virtualize business models and assets in the best possible way to reflect the times.

Why is this important?

This provides the moment to jump 5 years ahead in just 2 months when it comes to technologies like VR, e-learning and mobile-based real time product consultancy.

What is the opportunity?

Things that never changed can change now. There's nothing to preserve now at this point and starting to virtualize business models is key.

Implications and thought starters.

Will we go on a 1-week vacation into the mountains with our VR goggles soon? Will school kids get 100% accustomed to sit at home and have e-learning sessions? Will companies onboard new employees over virtual assistants in the future?



05

More humble, forever.

Never before has the full world felt so united. The amount of kindness happening right now is changing the way we think about each other and “cool” was just completely redefined.

Why is this important?

If kind is the new cool, more than ever before— and perfect is boring now, then we’re ready to move past the times of high-end photo shoots and swap quality with creativity.

What is the opportunity?

Redefine the essence of your brand and get out the humble, relatable part of your brand, even more than ever before.

Implications and thought starters.

Let your employees be your supermodels. Do good things and show it, even more than before. Don’t do things only for money, do it for a society that just learned that their safety was always an illusion.



06

THESIS # 7

So much screen time.

Never in this world was online communication and screen time as important for people as it is now. Whether it's a Skype family dinner or surfing Amazon to buy some extra pillows.

Why is this important?

Even the older generation in our society gets accustomed to e-commerce, video conferencing and other online technologies now. The age gap is evolving.

What is the opportunity?

With more screen time across our society, the "Social Media audience" we've always talked about changed within a few days. Adapting your strategy to this gives your brand advantage over the competition.

Implications and thought starters.

Think selling products though live shows on Instagram. Think about a content frequency to be consumed after breakfast, lunch and dinner again. Think if it's the right time to kick-off TikTok with engagement challenges.



07

Now. Social commerce.

Since physical shops in a lot of areas are closed, e-commerce is booming during this period. Especially users who have higher incomes are increasingly using online shopping services. Through amazing consulting experiences and new innovation, it's the future.

Why is this important?

E-commerce and social commerce can save your business now. Invest in the right setups and you can keep your business up and running.

What is the opportunity?

Create relatable storytelling and find strategies to incorporate products.

Implications and thought starters.

Cutting out-of-home budget and turning it into social commerce budget might boost your business now more than you ever imagined.



08

Digital will outgrow everything.

Based on the current situation, global ad spending is likely to decrease massively, however digital ad spending will still grow by at least 13% in 2020 — and e-commerce and digital services are about to be more relevant than anytime before.

Source: <https://www.emarketer.com>

Why is this important?

If physical shops close and a full society is locked down at home, why would you spend budget on out-of-home marketing? Budget for on-site events is dead for now.

What is the opportunity?

Redefining your marketing strategy by considering all trends and outlooks around current changes of the society.

Implications and thought starters.

If you haven't done it, now is the time to start real data marketing. All your classic media planning is irrelevant now, so make use of the digital growth and shift your ads to areas where people are seeing them now on the web and social networks.



09

#NewWork as the new normal.

The line between employees, freelancers and home office workers will be blurry in the future and companies will create many flexible models. That creates completely new personas.

Why is this important?

If people are changing the way they work, move and live, their needs and values evolve too.

What is the opportunity?

Creating products, services and content for a decentralized world that wants access to everything, no matter the location.

Implications and thought starters.

Virtual workshops for brand fans, employees and partners. Complete new office space designs to match the needs of a rebooted society. Brands that support this cultural shift will create brand love and come out strong.



10

Production needs new creativity.

You might think there are no productions anymore on-location? Think again. Change your perspective. Homes are the new shoot locations, and creativity is key.

Why is this important?

With shutting down productions, brands would lose market value and get disconnected from a society that currently gets redefined in only a few months.

What is the opportunity?

Find creative ways to produce content in a world where “home” is the best place to be – and produce. Put your media budget into assets that have been shot with smartphones.

Implications and thought starters.

A look into the homes of your employees, defining completely new production style guides that fit into the perception of “cool” of a society stuck on their sofas. De-centralize productions and hand them over to users who are shooting with mobile phones. Get inspired by what happened on TikTok already.



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What is after-work anyway?

As of now, after-work doesn't exist anymore. Weekends barely exist anymore. Would you shift Wednesday vs. Saturday – what is the difference if we're just at home?

Why is this important?

Until February 2020, we didn't consider all of society having time at home on the weekend or after work. That changed completely.

What is the opportunity?

Delivering new hobbies and time killers through social networks, decentral productions. Media spends can run at anytime, there are no rules about when people are online anymore.

Implications and thought starters.

Think of a new definition of chat roulette to meet strangers on your sofa. Think of campaigns that are delivered as a series each day 6pm sent from home. Think of live shows incorporating users via FaceTime chat.



12

Priorities and goals changed.

It will take a while until we feel safe in a plane with 300 people again. It will take a while until we hug strangers again. We learned that we're vulnerable with an unexpected reality check. We don't take our safety for granted anymore.

Why is this important?

Destroying a common feeling of safety in such a short time changes people but is not necessarily bad for us as human beings.

What is the opportunity?

When it comes to our dreams, what we want in life, what we call a good experience and adventure, things changed – adapt quickly.

Implications and thought starters.

Start being more intimate as a brand. Adapt your product to a society that feels unsafe for a while. Show people that you understand, that the value of expensive products isn't a standard anymore without a socially rewarding benefit.



13



What is inspiring now?

Inspired to go out? Inspired to take a road trip with friends? Inspired to hang out with a crowd? Celebrating your best friend's birthday? Not anymore. Inspiring just got re-defined.

Why is this important?

All the content you got in your toolbox that was called “inspiring” in February 2020, might not be appropriate anymore.

What is the opportunity?

Create content for people that mostly can't leave their homes, so we must find ways to fit into their updated lifestyle, at least for a while.

Implications and thought starters.

What is inspiring right now is having ideas for our situation. Give people solutions, tools, ways to connect. Give them opportunities to get off their sofa and discover themselves and their homes in a new way, and it'll be perceived as great content.



14

Events turn virtual.

When will we next go to a concert to watch our favorite artist? Or attend our team's football match? No one knows at this point. We need to think of new ways to bring fans together.

Why is this important?

Even in a crisis we still maintain our passion for music, art, culture and sports.

What is the opportunity?

Create virtual ways for events to happen. Think about different event formats. There are still ways to reach your audience through events.

Implications and thought starters.

Run events virtually. Live streaming. Create scale by going digital and allowing more people access. Use VR to create a sense of being there in person.



15

Digital spaces are the new IRL.

Suddenly digital spaces feel like our only real way to connect with people. Chat groups, instant messaging, group video calls and online meet-ups are our new social occasions. Digital spaces are the new in-real-life experiences.

Why is this important?

Digital spaces will grow as people find new ways to connect in a more virtual world.

What is the opportunity?

Understand if your brand plays a valuable role in these new “spaces”, like it would in real life social occasions.

Implications and thought starters.

Chat groups, WhatsApp and Facetime are where you can find people now. Also platforms like TikTok or Twitch with their strong focus on challenges, e-sports and gaming will go through an even bigger hype these days.



16

Big time for direct to consumer.

You can no longer just walk into a store and touch, feel or smell a product. Direct-to-consumer brands have to think of new ways of making their products tangible for their customers.

Why is this important?

We can no longer offer the same physical brand and product touchpoints.

What is the opportunity?

Use digital and social to create new brand experiences for people.

Implications and thought starters.

Try before you buy starter-kits delivered to homes. Virtual consultancy through e-commerce giving advice on styling or products. Free delivery and returns that make shopping from home barrier-free.



17

Mergers and new ideas.

A lot of businesses will go down. A lot of businesses will grow and appear out of nowhere. There will be new companies, services – and a lot of collaborations and mergers.

Why is this important?

Brand collaborations were cool before, but they're even cooler now.

What is the opportunity?

Start reaching out to brand partners, even if they're your biggest competition. This could be the biggest opportunity to stand out.

Implications and thought starters.

Surprising collaborations in crisis times to extend reach. Imagine two major competitive companies doing a collaboration product right now? Nice and humble home-challenges by employees calling out other companies to stay safe. And new brands created in mergers and startups in collaborations that we could not even have imagined in February 2020.



18

A lot of our problems are solved.

Finally, some good news for society. Many of our daily problems, motivations and frustrations we had 2 weeks ago are solved at this point. Who would be frustrated because of a parking ticket or a stain in a new shirt anymore? Unimportant problems, solved.

Why is this important?

If everything is perceived differently and problems are solved, we react to different messages and things.

What is the opportunity?

Find the right sweet spot for your brand, the area that makes your product great, even after COVID-19.

Implications and thought starters.

Connect to society's new thinking. Force creativity, create accelerator programs, support a society getting back on track as a brand with your assets.



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Opportunities —

E-Commerce / Social Commerce / Virtual Products / E-Learning / Digital Media / Virtual Reality / Online Coaching / Virtual Events / New Digital Shopping Experiences / Long-Format Video Content / In-Home Shows / Mergers and Collaborations / #NewWork / Actionable Content / Build-up Brand Love

Challenges —

Organic Trend / Travel / Event Business / Out-of-Home Advertising / Reshaping Strategies for your Brand / Turning Polished Perfect Content into Relatable Real Content / Adapting the Brand as the Society Adapts / Missing the Opportunity to Stand out in E-Commerce Now





All industries
need to innovate at
10 times the speed
at this point.

COVID-19 might change the world permanently. Kickstart your team and innovate to keep jobs safe.



Fashion.

WHAT NOW?

The fashion industry will turn even more towards e-commerce and social commerce might be your biggest traffic driver. Aside from this, with the values of a complete society changed, new products and brand positionings might be needed.

Implications

- Run daily inspiration and styling shows now on IG, FB, TikTok and more.
- Rethink how to run Fashion Weeks in a virtual way
- As shops might stay closed for a while, start building up virtual style consulting and 1:1 outfit advice services.
- Show your designers on social channels, brand fans like to see them.
- Choose a good partner to find out the next level of your e-comm user experience.

Food.

WHAT NOW?

While everyone still needs food, what we eat might change a bit. Right now, we're appreciating vacuum-packed food more than fresh goods — and expiry dates count. On the other side, there's so much more time for cooking now.

Implications

- People have time, run daily cooking shows on social channels and engage your audience to cook along.
- Forget about super polished food shots, it's a thirst trap at this point.
- Be brave enough to turn away from 5-star restaurant food shots to "cooked-at-home by myself" food shots.
- Cooking differently will be a big thing, be prepared to deliver new recipes and inspire people with new ways of cooking.



Sports.

WHAT NOW?

As sports clubs, fitness parks and studios are mostly closed, people must find ways to do sports at home. Virtual trainings, in-home sports apps and YouTube sports sessions are the biggest winners right now.

Implications

- Take yourself to Youtube, into apps or other tools that allow users to train at home and engage with your brand.
- A lot of brands will have strong resources on that topic now, expect new innovations coming up soon.
- That said, if you have the opportunities, be the one who invests into innovations in that area.
- Think virtual 1:1 trainers, live training with limited groups on social networks, monetization through access-fees to trainings with celebrities and more.
- E-commerce will also be huge in the sports industry, but the products might have to change a bit.

Automotive.

WHAT NOW?

For the automotive industry, this might finally push open the door for strong innovations like selling cars online, more virtualization of service processes and more digital access to the brand.

Implications

- Think about VR test drives at this point.
- The automotive industry is far back when it comes to e-commerce, now it's time to believe in the fact that people would buy a car online.
- If cars get sold online, think though the delivery process, it can be as good as the showroom handover.
- Create virtual car shows from users' homes during the lock-down time, use your employees and brand fans to create content.
- Move away from showroom thinking and make sure you're able to sell a car even on your Instagram timeline after all this.



Travel.

WHAT NOW?

Travel and tourism are the industries that are most likely to have to re-invent themselves in a way. What is travelling in a world that doesn't feel completely safe anymore, and how can the industry get the best out of it?

Implications

- Might be that it's the time of VR at this point. How about travelling for one day to Bali with your loved ones, with VR goggles and on your sofa.
- Safety feeling is key, the industry has to communicate and setup a lot of assets that make people feel safe in different places on earth again.
- Stepping away now from advertising your tourism offer is key, but you can find innovative ways to stay on the map (think in a "Come to us, later" way).
- Travel websites, social media content and imagery must change, for now, as everything out there is only a thirst trap.

Services.

WHAT NOW?

A lot of services will benefit from the current situation. Every business that is virtual and can be done via online technology has great potential. However, strong innovation is needed.

Implications

- Virtual consulting and coaching might take off in the near future.
- Get prepared to figure out the best way of running workshops, client relationships and alignments through digital communication tools.
- Be innovative, it is probably your industry that is made to help the suffering economy at this point and keep jobs alive.
- Make sure your service is available and accessible online, perfectly understandable, so businesses or users in need can decide to work with you.



All systems reset.
Let's cool down and be
prepared. Because the
future is about to arrive
much earlier now.

The future is here, but it's just not completely rolled out.



Key takeaways.

- 1 — “It was always like this” is finally irrelevant.
- 2 — Re-think all your channel- and marketing-strategies.
- 3 — Prepare for the future, it’s going to arrive early now.
- 4 — Social media and content will change drastically.
- 5 — A society that used to be so busy suddenly has time for your brand.
- 6 — E-comm, direct-to-consumer and social commerce will be on trend.
- 7 — Make sure you spend media money wisely now.
- 8 — Keep analyzing society’s behavioral change.

No worries —
we're going to tackle
this new reality.



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